Lesson 9 - Walking in the Spirit



Christianity is not a modification or an improvement of the sinful life with which we were born. It is receiving by faith and the experience of baptism, the righteous life of Christ, in exchange for our sinful life that was executed on the cross of Christ. This is the experience of the new birth, which was discussed in Lesson 8.

The moment you experience this new birth, you have passed from death to life, from condemnation of the law to justification unto life. This is the beginning of the Christian life. The work of now subduing the sinful desires of the flesh and reproducing the holy and righteous life of Christ in believers is the work of the Holy Spirit. This work is the process of sanctification.

While this experience of sanctification does not contribute one iota towards your title to heaven, it does witness to the salvation you already have in Christ through justification by faith. Hence, sanctification, the fruit of the Spirit, is witnessing the power of the gospel (see Colossians 1:27).

For this to happen you must learn to walk in the Spirit. In Adam, all you were capable of was walking in the flesh, satisfying the desires of the sinful nature. But now, as a bornagain Christian, you are able to walk in the Spirit as Christ Himself did when He was on this earth. This is what this present lesson is all about - the experience of walking in the Spirit.

1. How can believers overcome the desires of their sinful natures? Galatians 5:16

It is impossible for a believer to fully overcome the sinful desires of the flesh in his own strength (see Romans 7:1-19). This is only possible when we walk in the Spirit.

2. What kind of fruit do we bear when we walk in the Spirit? Galatians 5:22-25

Notice that when Paul talks about the flesh in Galatians 5:19 he uses the word "works." This is because works is what we produce. In Galatians 5:22 he uses the word "fruit," because it is not we, but the Holy Spirit, who produces the fruit.

3. What claim did Paul make in Christ? Philippians 4:13

The strength we receive to live the Christian life comes from Christ. Through the indwelling of His Spirit, the victorious life of Christ is communicated to us who walk in the Spirit.

4. What is fulfilled in us when we walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh? Romans 8:4

God's law is love, and when we walk in the Spirit the unconditional and self-emptying love of Christ will be manifested in us (see Romans 13:8-10).

5. Where is the battle between the flesh and the Spirit fought? Romans 8:5

The mind is the battleground in the Christian warfare. Those who are walking in the flesh are preoccupied with pleasing the desires of their sinful natures. Those who walk in the Spirit want to please their Lord Jesus Christ.

6. What is the result of being carnally or spiritually minded? Romans 8:6

(Carnally):

(Spiritually):

The word "carnal" means controlled by the sinful desires of the flesh, your sinful nature. Because the flesh is sinful it can only produce death, "the wages of sin" (Romans 6:23). Only through Christ's Spirit do we have life and peace.

7. Why is the mind controlled by the flesh (sinful nature) hostile to God? Romans 8:7

8. Is it possible to please God while walking in the flesh? Romans 8:8

9. Who should the Christian allow to control his or her mind? Romans 8:9

By obeying the gospel you have said in your heart, "Not I, but Christ." Christian living is putting this decision into practice.

10. What attitude must the Christian have towards one's sinful nature? Romans 8:10

Since no change takes place in our sinful natures before Christ comes (see Romans 8:22-25), we must put no confidence in the flesh (our sinful natures) to fulfill the will of God. Only through the Spirit of Christ can we please God.

11. If a believer is Spirit-controlled, what spiritual power is manifested? Romans 8:11

The ultimate power of sin is death. The sins of the whole world put Christ into the grave, but none of our sins could keep Him there. His resurrection therefore proved that the Spirit's power over sin is greater than all the power Satan can master through our sinful flesh. Hence, the gospel is the power of God to save you from every aspect of sin - its guilt and punishment as well as its power and dominion.

12. If you have been born of the Spirit what is your obligation? Romans 8:12-14

As Christians, we have an obligation. It is to live according to the Spirit. All that the flesh (sinful nature) can produce is sin which leads to death. Only the Spirit can subdue the flesh and produce genuine righteousness.

13. What other expression does the Bible use for "walking in the Spirit"? Romans 13:14

To "put on the Lord Jesus Christ" simply means you allow the Spirit of Christ to control your life. The Holy Spirit is Christ's representative on earth.

14. Who is the one that gives you real spiritual life? John 6:63

The source of real spiritual life is the Holy Spirit. When He comes and dwells in you He brings with Him the life of Christ, which has conquered both sin and death, replacing them with righteousness and life.

15. Besides enabling victory over sin, into what does the Spirit guide you? John 16:13

Jesus said, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free" (John 8:32). The freedom that Jesus was talking about was the freedom from our slavery to sin (see John 8:32-36).

16. What transformation takes place when you walk in the Spirit? 2 Corinthians 3:17, 18

17. Who actually does the work of sanctification in your life? 1 Peter 1:2

The work of sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit. Your part is to keep your eyes focused on Christ and walk in the Spirit by faith.

18. How should we, who have been baptized into Christ's death, walk? Romans 6:4

Walking in newness of life means that now we let the Holy Spirit control our lives. It is in this way that the life of Christ is reproduced in us.

19. What kind of life will you live when you are walking in the Spirit? Ephesians 5:1, 2

20. What will you experience when you walk in the light of the gospel? 1 John 1:7

Walking in the light is the same as walking in the power of the gospel since Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world" (John 8:12).

21. How much fruit (holy living) are you able to produce without Christ? John 15:4-8

None!

Walking in the Spirit is the same as abiding in Christ. If we abide in Christ we will bear much fruit and God will be pleased.

22. In whose strength was Christ able to overcome temptation? Luke 4:13, 14

The same power by which Christ conquered temptation is available to every believer. When we walk in the Spirit as Christ did, we will be able to experience victory over the flesh as He did.

23. Why is Christian living so important in witnessing the gospel? Matthew 5:14-16

The world judges Christians by their works. By our unconditional love for one another, all men will know that we are Christ's disciples (see John 13:34, 35).

Notes

My Response to Lesson 9

• Motivated by Christ's unconditional and self-emptying love for you, is it your sincere desire to walk in the Spirit, that all may see the matchless charm of your Savior?

Response: _____

Savior of the World Bible Course, Copyright © 1997, 1999, 2000

See Introduction for additional acknowledgments.

Originally printed in the USA by

SW/Gospel Publishing

www.swgospel.com

You are authorized to reproduce this lesson, as is, for the furtherance of the gospel, but not for personal or other gain.